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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 001713

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: CHINA ARMS EMBARGO: IRELAND TO FOLLOW EU CONSENSUS

REF: A. SECSTATE 247288

[1](#)B. DUBLIN 01700

Classified By: POLITICAL ECONOMIC COUNSELOR MARY DALY  
FOR REASONS 1.4.(B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) On November 23, Emboff, drawing on reftel points, spoke to Niall Brady, the DFA's Deputy Director for Asia-Pacific Affairs. Brady stated that while Ireland remains concerned about human rights and regional stability, it would not block EU consensus, either on a decision to lift the embargo or a decision to announce an intention to lift the embargo at the EU-China summit. He said that the lifting of the embargo is inevitable, and only a matter of modalities and time. He predicted that the lift will be implemented sometime during or after the British EU presidency. The embargo, he said, is "anachronistic" and has failed to stop human rights abuses or prevent China from exerting pressure on neighboring countries. Ireland wants to see demonstrations of improvements in China, he said, but the EU has not set specific conditions and are not likely to, as the EU does not want to alienate the Chinese Government by making outright demands. He said the Chinese Government recognizes the importance of economic relations with the EU as well as the fact that it will have to meet some of the EU's concerns in order for positive relations to continue. Brady added that Ireland does not have an arms trade with China.

[1](#)2. (C) In a later conversation with Embassy's POL/ECON chief, Cliona Manahan, DFA Director for Asia-Pacific affairs, said that the EU continues to grapple with the inconsistency of calling China a strategic partner while still keeping the embargo in place. She said that the Chinese Vice Premier made that point strongly in his visit to Ireland, and that that argument resonates with EU governments. She said that there is a feeling among the EU that there should be a natural progression in relations with China, a logical extension of which would be lifting the embargo. The question, she said, is how and when. She noted the importance of strengthening the Code of Conduct. She also noted continuing opposition from parliaments and publics to lifting the embargo, and said that NGOs have told the GOI there is more that China can be pushed to do on human rights. At this point, she said, it is not yet clear how the EU will handle the summit with China, or what further progress the EU might require of China.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: The Irish "bottom line" has been consistent since July, namely that they will follow EU consensus. However, their emphasis has changed. In October, they focused more on their concerns about lifting the embargo. They said then that EU governments increasingly understood and shared regional security concerns and also were affected by parliamentary opposition, based on human rights concerns, to lifting the embargo. This week, they have returned more to the theme that lifting the embargo is inevitable and it is up to others (largely the Dutch, as EU president) to help shape the "how" and "when." We suspect that the Chinese Vice Premier's visit this month affected the Irish, switching the balance of the argument to what Manahan referred to as the inconsistency of maintaining an embargo on a "strategic partner". Both Manahan and Brady referred to the pressures they have felt from China and "third parties," including the U.S.

KENNY